add to the convenience of passport applicants. Government have adopted several measures for streamlining the entire process of issue of passports. These inter alia include — increasing the availability of application froms by allowing printing, distribution and sale at nominal cost of passport forms by approved private printers; establishing 15 Passport Collection Centres to accept passport applications, in addition to the existing 28 Passport Offices; computerising processing procedures in 18 of the 28 Passport Offices; launch of the Central Passport Organisation web site; holding of passport adalats etc. The new measures proposed in the coming months include a "Tatkaal" scheme of issue of out of turn passports to eligible applicants and introduction of machine writing of passport booklets at the Regional Passport Office, Delhi.

Recent changes intorduced to further simplify procedures include: reducing to one from two years the requirement of police verification from all places of previous stay issuing full validity passports on post-police verifiction basis in cases of re-issue and duplicate passports where there is no change in address of the applicant, all cases where a Verification Certificate from an authrorised official is available and all employees of Central/State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings, Armed Forces and their spouses where NOC from the Head of Department is available.

Extradition Treaties Signed By India

1567. DR JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the extradition treaties signed by India since independence alongwith the objective behind signing such treaties; and

(b) how far this objective has been realised?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Since Independence, India has signed Extradition Treaties with nine countries i.e. Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Hong Kong, Nepal, Russian Federation, U.A.E, U.K. and U.S.A. With two other countries—Netherlands and Switzerland—though the Extradition Treaties were signed before Independence, they were notified only after Independence under Extradition At, 1962,

The Extradition Treaties provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of fugitive criminals. The objective behind signing Extrad-

ition Treaties is to combat all crimes including organized crimes such as terrorism, drug trafficking and economic crimes by facilitating the availability of fugitive criminals for trial.

(b) Seven (7) fugitive criminals have been extradited to India duing the period 1995—99. India has also made requests for extradition of 10 other fugitive criminals, which are under consideration of various countries. India has extradited 4 fugitive criminals from India to other countries during the same period.

Eviction of Illegally occupied Land

1568. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the countries who have illegally occupied the Indian land togetherwith the area of such land and since when the same has been occupied; and

(b) whether Government have made any effort to vacate any part of the said land and whether any success has been achieved; if so, to what extent and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH: (a) and (b) The area under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan is approximately 78,000 sq. kms. There is in addition, an area of approximately 38,000 sq. kms. which is under the illegal occupation of China. Following the so-called "Sino-Pak Boundary Agreement" of 1963, Pakistan has illegally ceded another 5,180 sq. kms. of Indian territory to China.

Government is committed to ensure that the territorial integrity of India is not compromised under any circumstances. Under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, Government is committed to resolving all issues with Pakistan through peaceful negotiations and direct bilateral dialogue.

Discussion on the boundary question with China are conducted within the framework of the India-China Joint Working Group (JWG) and its sub group, the India China Expert Group (EG). Both India and China are committed to working towards a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.